

FAQs

What is a Livable Center?

A Livable Center is a place where people can live, work, and play with minimal reliance on automobiles. Livable Centers are places with a mix of development types and diverse housing options, which contribute to a community that is walkable, connected, and accessible by multiple types of transportation modes (such as walking and biking).

What are the goals of the University Area Livable Centers study?

The goal is to develop a community vision and long-range plan that encourages a reduced dependence on automobiles through improved multimodal access and connectivity. The plan will identify economic, housing, and urban design strategies that can reduce auto dependence and improve health and the quality of the built environment, creating quality walkable, mixed-use places that improve the lives of the University Area and surrounding communities.

Why are City of Henderson and RTC conducting a Livable Centers study?

The goal of RTC's Livable Centers program is to encourage implementation of the [Southern Nevada Strong Regional Policy Plan](#) and the development of "Complete Communities." Complete communities is a concept identified in the regional plan to locate jobs, housing, transportation options, and community amenities within a reasonable proximity of one another so that everyone has access to housing, economic opportunity, and healthy resources, regardless of income or transportation choice.

Why was the Nevada State University area chosen for this study?

The University area was chosen through a competitive application process because of its potential for future transformation into a town center with reduced dependency on automobiles. Much of the land to the north and west of the campus is undeveloped land owned by the City of Henderson, which means that it is a blank canvas with great opportunity. The area is also serviced by public transit and the Harry Reid Union Pacific Railroad Trail, which provide a foundation for increasing active and multimodal transportation options.

Unique considerations also included the planned addition of new campus housing at Nevada State University, proximity to the historic Railroad Pass Casino and Travel Center, major infrastructure barriers including the I-515/95, I-11, and the Union Pacific rail line, and the preservation of natural resources and recreational uses provided by the abutting open space and mountain landscape.

What are the boundaries of the study area?

The University Area Livable Centers Study covers a 1,400-acre area. The study area is roughly bounded on the north and east by I-515/95 and South Boulder Highway and to the south and west by undeveloped land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. It includes the Nevada State University Campus, which is planning for significant expansion in the future. The study area is also bounded to the northwest by the Mission Hills and Black Mountain Ranch Neighborhoods and to the northwest by the Old Vegas Neighborhoods. Other land uses within the study area include multi-family residential and industrial uses, including Poly-West and Flowers Baking.

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What is the timeline for the study?

The study began with a needs assessment and review of existing plans and studies in late 2022. Walk audits and public engagement opportunities began in early 2023 with continued public engagement through mid-summer 2023. The final plan is anticipated to be presented to the City of Henderson and the Regional Transportation Commission in June 2024.

How can I get involved in the Livable Centers study?

Public engagement took place throughout the planning process throughout 2023. The planning team targeted residents and businesses within a three-mile radius of the study area. Target audiences included: The Nevada State University community, the Crescent Ridge, Paradise Coach Resorts, Paradise Courts, Paradise Ranch and Paradise Hills neighborhoods that are located within the study area, and the Mission Hills, Black Mountain Ranch, and Old Vegas, among others. Students, residents, and other interested parties can participate in walk and bike audits and complete online surveys as the study progresses.

To stay informed on project updates, email collegearealivablecenters@gmail.com.

What is a walk/bike audit, and how can someone participate?

Walk and bike audits are in-person assessments that evaluate the overall pedestrian and bicycle quality of an identified street or pathway. Audits seek to identify specific challenges and opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort and typically look at whether streets are safe and have adequate visibility, if sidewalks are in good condition and ADA compliant, if there are benches and shade coverings, if bike lanes are present, and if pedestrian/cyclist amenities provide sufficient space and time for crossing the street. Walk and bike audits can also evaluate the overall comfort level for pedestrians and cyclists using the roadway, such as whether the speed of traffic or on-site parking creates an uncomfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Walk and bike audits for this study were conducted in February 2023.

How will this plan incorporate the Nevada State University Campus Master Plan Update?

Nevada State University updated their Campus Master Plan, which encompasses about 500 acres within the study area. Nevada State University is planning for a future enrollment of 20,000 students over the next 25 years. The Nevada State University Campus Master Plan was adopted in 2023. The University Area Livable Centers Study will include recommendations to support the expanding student body as well as the local residents, such as grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, health clinics, open space and recreational areas. Amenities will be identified through community input, economic analysis and scenario planning.

What kinds of commercial and residential development will be considered for this study?

The study will look at a mix of land uses that encourage community interactions and active transportation choices, with a focus on walking and biking. Developments for consideration within the study area include increased housing, mixed-use developments, and open space and parks to provide a sense of community to area residents. Recommendations for developments will be identified through a community needs assessment, market analysis, and scenario planning.

How will multimodal transportation be explored in this study?

All forms of transportation will be examined to support the needs of all users, whether they choose to walk, bike, roll, use transit or drive.

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Will this study look at road access infrastructure?

Yes. The study will look at existing roadways, sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, and transit stops, and identify ways to improve multimodal access and connectivity within the study area as well as to and from the study area. With the future expansion of Nevada State University, the potential need for additional roadway access to the campus will be considered. As a “Livable Center,” recommendations for the study area will prioritize transportation modes beyond the single use vehicle (transit, walking, biking, scooters, etc.).

How will transportation safety be addressed in the study?

The study will identify transportation investments that will provide for the safe movement of pedestrians, bicycles, transit and personal vehicles in the Henderson University Area. It will also estimate health-related impacts and benefits attributed to the transportation system and built environment. Providing for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists in transportation projects can improve the mobility, access and safety for all users.

Will accessibility be considered in the study?

The study will examine mobility investments to make the area accessible to all people, particularly for those with mobility and accessibility concerns.

How will the study determine final recommendations and real projects?

The study will conclude in a final strategic plan document that summarizes recommendations and final decisions for the study area based on input and priorities from the community, stakeholders, the walk and bike audits, stakeholder interviews and community engagement along with the outcomes from a community needs assessment. All recommendations will be evaluated for feasibility and include timeframes for implementation from near-term (1-year) to short-term (5-year) projects that address transportation, community health, economic development, housing and the built environment, and placemaking. The implementation plan will include a tracking matrix of actions and projects identified to incrementally implement over time to improve the study area.

GLOSSARY

Accessible: able to be reached by all users including motorists, transit-riders, freight-carriers bicyclists and pedestrians, including people of all abilities.

Active Transportation: a means of getting around that is powered by human energy, primarily walking and bicycling.

Built Environment: man-made structures, features, and facilities viewed collectively as an environment in which people live and work.

Community Health: non-clinical approaches for improving health, preventing disease and reducing health disparities through addressing social, behavioral, environmental, economic and medical determinants of health in a geographically defined population.

Connectivity: the density of connections in path or road networks and the directness of links. A well-connected road or path network has many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead-ends (cul-de-sacs). As connectivity increases, travel distances decrease and route options increase, allowing more direct travel between destinations, creating a more accessible and resilient system.

Land Use: the human use of land representing the economic and cultural activities practiced at a given place.

Mixed-use Development: a type of urban development, urban design, urban planning and/or a zoning classification that blends multiple uses, such as residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment, into one space, where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian connections.

Multimodal Transportation: Multimodal transportation is the movement of people and goods on roadways, including but not limited to, motorists, transit-riders, freight-carriers bicyclists and pedestrians, including those with disabilities.

Placemaking: process that leads to the creation of quality places where people want to live, work, play, and learn. In most instances, placemaking is the incremental improvement of a place over a long period of time through many small projects and activities.

Public Engagement: the practice of involving citizens, community non-profit organizations, businesses, and government together to solve problems that affect people's lives.

Rolling: a term to describe the act of walking for a person using a wheelchair or mobility device.

Town Center: the central part or main business and commercial area of a town.

Urban Design: a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to the design of the built environment that focuses on people-centered design for buildings and the spaces between them.

Walkability: the ability to safely walk to services and amenities within a reasonable distance, usually defined as a walk of 30 minutes or less.

Walk Audit: an assessment of the pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort of a particular area.